



Farmers Market Promotion Program
Room 4004-South Building
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-0269
www.ams.usda.gov/FMPP
(202) 694-4000 or (202) 720-8317

Farmers Market Promotion Program Invitation for Application Reviewers

Prospective FMPP Reviewer:

The Farmers Market Promotion Program of the Marketing Services Division (MSD), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) invites you to share your expertise in direct producer-to-consumer marketing of domestic agricultural commodities by reviewing applications for projects to be funded under the Farmers' Market Promotion Program.

The FMPP is a competitive grant program that began in 2006, with the goal of expanding domestic farmers markets, roadside stands, community supported agriculture (CSA) programs, agritourism, and other direct producer-to-consumer marketing opportunities. FMPP grant funds are eligible to the following entities: agricultural cooperatives, producer networks, producer associations, local governments, non-profit corporations, public benefit corporations, economic development corporations, regional farmers' market authorities, and Tribal governments. The FMPP is seeking participants in the application review process to assist us in identifying innovative, sustainable direct-marketing projects that can be considered for funding.

The Review Process

The FMPP application review process typically begins in the spring, and in years past reviewers have been selected by June. A firm schedule will be forwarded to all selected reviewers.

- Selected reviewers are typically given four (4) to six (6) weeks to individually complete review of 15-30 applications, each consisting of 10-12 pages of narrative.
- Upon completion of individual reviews, an official FMPP team review will be convened. Reviewers should be able to commit one week of their time to participate. The team meetings, via electronic mechanism and/or conference calls, will provide reviewers with the opportunity to discuss the merits of the applications and reach consensus on rankings.
- Teams of three (3), including a designated leader, will be identified. The team leader will have the additional responsibilities of facilitating consensus and ranking proposals during the official FMPP Reviewer Meeting.





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- The criteria for evaluating project applications are pre-determined and found within FMPP Guidelines for each grant cycle/fiscal year. Prior to beginning reviews, FMPP staff will schedule a conference call to provide a general orientation and additional details about evaluation.
- Reviewers are an important aspect to the FMPP grant process. As such, AMS is utilizing qualified peer reviewers to assist in the selection of qualified applications under 2011 FMPP. For the 2011 review period, qualified peer reviewers will be provided a small stipend upon completion of the review process. AMS will facilitate electronic (or conference call) communications for review teams after individual reviews have been completed.

Reviewer Requirements

FMPP is seeking individuals who can be fair, objective, and enthusiastic throughout this process:

- Reviewers typically include Federal employees and State and local community peers from agricultural cooperatives, producer networks, producer associations, local governments, non-profit corporations, public benefit corporations, economic development corporations, regional farmers' market authorities, and Tribal governments.
- Reviewers are expected to have a general knowledge of direct producer-to-consumer marketing that includes operational aspects of farmers markets, roadside stands, CSAs, agritourism, and electronic benefit transfers projects. Reviewers will apply their knowledge and expertise in these areas to objectively assess applications and provide both a numeric score and written comments for each application.
- As the number of applications for specific project activities continues to increase, AMS is particularly interested in prospective reviewers with hands-on experience and knowledge of the electronic benefits transfer (EBT) process. Farmers market; and Federal, State, and local government personnel with this experience are highly encouraged to participate.
- Reviewers should be knowledgeable of how to objectively review and assess applications in order to effectively evaluate project goals, work plans, and expected results in determining the potential for project success.





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- The review process for Federal grants through FMPP requires that the reviewer be:
 - ✓ Objective and impartial.
 - ✓ Free of organizational, racial, or other biases.
 - ✓ Free of conflicts of interest.
 - ✓ Able to work effectively in groups.
 - ✓ Able to maintain strict confidentiality.
 - ✓ Available to serve for the duration of the review process.
 - ✓ Available to communicate with review team members in an electronic (or conference call) format as provided by FMPP staff for one week to complete the team reviews.
- Reviewers must be aware of potential conflict situations that may arise during the course of reviewing applications. If a reviewer has a conflict, or an appearance of a conflict, with one or more applications, the reviewer must immediately bring the matter to the attention of the FMPP Branch Chief so that the application can be reassigned for review. Examples of conflict include, but are not limited to:
 - ✓ Financial, organizational, familial, or subcontractor relationships, to any applicant organization applying for an FMPP grant this fiscal year.
 - ✓ Personal friendships that may affect the reviewer's judgment or be seen by a reasonable person familiar with the relationship to potentially affect the reviewer's judgment.
 - ✓ Indirect or direct interest(s) (which includes paid or unpaid employees, volunteers, or board members for an applicant organization).
- Failure to identify a conflict-of-interest may subject a reviewer to administrative sanction (i.e., removal from the current review and/or disqualification from involvement in future reviews of grant applications).

Reviewers should confine all conversations and communications about a particular proposal to their respective team members. A confidentiality agreement must be signed that requires a reviewer to refrain from sharing, with the PUBLIC or ANYONE, information acquired before, during, or after the review process. This includes, but is not limited to:

- ✓ The identity or contents of any application.
- ✓ Written comments.
- ✓ Scores.
- ✓ Team discussions.
- ✓ Recommendations to fund or not fund any application.





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Reviewer Selection and Notification

If you would like to serve the Farmers' Market Promotion Program as a Reviewer and can commit to the terms of participation outlined above and the FMPP Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Guidelines (confidentiality documents), please visit www.ams.usda.gov/FMPP for the Peer Reviewer Application or call (202) 694-4000 and speak with one of the FMPP grant team members listed below to discuss your participation:

Ricardo Krajewski, Economist – Ricardo.Krajewski@ams.usda.gov

Carmen Humphrey, Branch Chief – Carmen.Humphrey@ams.usda.gov

Karl Hacker, Economist – Karl.Hacker@ams.usda.gov

Alicia Bell-Sheetter, Agricultural Communications Spec. – Alicia.Bell-Sheetter@ams.usda.gov

There is no preference for the selection of Reviewers based on race, ethnic identity, religion, age, or organization or institutional affiliation. FMPP will maintain confidentiality and safeguard personal information concerning the individuals serving as FMPP Reviewers including, but not limited to, their names, credentials, affiliations, and any financial assistance received as Reviewers for FMPP.

FMPP staff will contact those selected to participate in the review process. We appreciate your interest in FMPP and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Carmen H. Humphrey, Manager
Farmers Market Promotion Program

